

## Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 100845Z DEC 76

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3029

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

USMISSION NATO

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, CH, UR

SUBJECT: HONG KONG COMMUNIST PRESS ATTITUDES TOWARD PRESIDENT-ELECT  
CARTER ON NATO, THE SALT TALKS AND JAPAN

SUMMARY. THE LOCAL PRC-CONTROLLED PRESS HAS EXPRESSED IMPLICIT  
APPROVAL OF PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER'S COMMITMENTS TO NATO AND  
JAPAN, AND DISAPPROVAL OF BOTH CARTER AND VANCE'S PRIORITIES  
REGARDING A SALT AGREEMENT. THUS THE LOCAL PRC PRESS CONTINUES,  
IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY PEKING MEDIA COMMENTARY ON THE  
NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION, TO FLESH OUT PEKING'S LINE OF SUPPORTING  
U.S. RESOLVE AGAINST THE RUSSIANS WHILE WARNING OF ANY  
COOPERATION WITH THEM. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE PRC DOMESTIC MEDIA MAINTAIN THEIR SILENCE ON PRESIDENT-  
ELECT CARTER'S FOREIGN POLICY STATEMENTS, THE HONG KONG COMMUNIST  
PRESS CONTINUES TO EXPRESS FREELY ITS OPINIONS REGARDING AREAS  
OF CHINESE CONCERN. ONE OF THESE AREAS IS AMERICA'S ATTITUDE  
TOWARD NATO, A KEY INDICATOR TO THE CHINESE OF U.S. WILLINGNESS  
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TO SUPPORT ITS ALLIES AND STAND UP TO THE RUSSIANS. A WEN

WEI PAO COMMENTARY DECEMBER 8, AT THE END OF THE NATO DEFENSE MINISTERS CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS, HAD EXPRESSED APPARENT UNEASINESS OVER THE LACK OF A CARTER COMMITMENT TO NATO, NOTING AT THE TIME THAT THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT NATO WILL RECEIVE UNDER A CARTER ADMINISTRATION "REMAINS TO BE SEEN." HOWEVER, WITH OBVIOUS APPROVAL, THE SAME NEWSPAPER OBSERVES IN A DECEMBER 10 COMMENTARY THAT CARTER HAS NOW PLEDGED TO THE NATO FOREIGN MINISTER MEETING THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE -- AND MOREOVER INCREASE -- U.S. SUPPORT FOR NATO. THE COMMENTARY ADDS ITS OWN INTERPRETATION TO THE CARTER PLEDGE, NOTING THAT "HEREAFTER AMERICAN TROOP STRENGTH IN EUROPE CAN ONLY INCREASE, NOT DECREASE."

2. A SIGNED COMMENTARY IN THE DECEMBER 9 HSIN WAN PAO, HOWEVER, EXPRESSES CONCERN WITH BOTH CARTER AND HIS SECRETARY OF STATE DESIGNATE VANCE FOR HAVING GIVEN PRIORITY TO THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF SALT AGREEMENT. NOTING THAT THIS MUST BE QUITE PLEASING TO THE KREMLIN, THE COMMENTARY FALLS BACK ON THE STANDARD PRC RHETORIC THAT ANY SUPERPOWER AGREEMENT ON LIMITING NUCLEAR WEAPONS "IS COMPLETELY USELESS." IT POINTEDLY ADDS THAT EVEN A SALT II AGREEMENT WILL NOT SOLVE ANY OF THE REAL PROBLEMS, SUCH AS THE SOVIET THREAT TO EUROPE -- A THREAT DESCRIBED IN FULL AT THE RECENT NATO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE.

3. A THIRD COMMENTARY ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION OF PEARL HARBOR NOTES AT THE OUTSET CARTER'S STATEMENT THAT, "JAPAN IS ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST IMPORTANT ALLIES." THE DECEMBER 10 TA KUNG PAO COMMENTARY ALLEGES THAT THE SURPRISE ATTACK TACTICS OF THE JAPANESE IMPERIALISTS AND HITLER FASCISTS DURING WORLD WAR II ARE NOW BEING ADVOCATED BY THE NEW CZARS, FASCISTS AND SOCIAL-IMPERIALISTS IN THE SOVIET UNION, IT CONCLUDES THAT THE ANNIVERSARY OF PEARL HARBOR IS A LESSON TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, THE JAPANESE PEOPLE AND OTHERS TO HEIGHTEN THEIR VIGILANCE AGAINST THE SOVIET THREAT.

4. COMMENT: THIS SPATE OF COMMENTARY REINFORCES THE IMPLICIT MESSAGE OF CHINESE LEADERSHIP PROCLAMATIONS SINCE THE DEATH OF CHAIRMAN MAO THAT THE PRC'S PRIMARY CONCERN CENTERS ON SHARED SINO-U.S. GLOBAL STRATEGIC PERCEPTIONS, PARTICULARLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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U.S. RESOLVE VIS-A-VIS INCREASING SOVIET MILITARY EXPANSION. AS WITH PRC DOMESTIC MEDIA, THE LOCAL COMMUNIST PRESS - IN THE FACE OF A CONCERTED SOVIET EFFORT TO APPEAR REASONABLE VIS-A-VIS PEKING -- CONTINUES TO HAMMER HOME THE NEED FOR PREPAREDNESS AGAINST MOSCOW'S EXPANSIONIST DESIGNS. CROSS

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